



BEST FOR ALL

We will set all students on a path to success.

Judy Spencer
Senior Director of Choice
Office of Districts & Schools

May 20, 2021

Agenda

- I. Definitions & Statutory References
- II. Number of Virtual Schools
- III. How to Open a Virtual School
- IV. Virtual School FAQs
- V. Charter Schools & Virtual Learning
- VI. Additional Info & Resources
- VII. Questions



Definitions & Statutory References

Virtual School: a public school in which the school uses technology in order to deliver a significant portion of instruction to its students via the internet in a virtual or remote setting.
T.C.A. §49-16-203(2)

T.C.A. §49-16-201 through T.C.A. §49-16-216

Part is set to be repealed effective June 30, 2023



Definitions & Statutory References

Virtual Education Program: a course or series of courses offered by a public school district or public charter school via online instruction. These programs may be used to expand and enhance curricular offerings and to remediate students but **may not constitute a significant portion of the instruction** provided to students.

- Not defined in statute
- T.C.A. §49-16-101 through T.C.A. §49-16-105

State Board Policy 3.208 on Distance Learning and e-Learning: on the Agenda for repeal at the State Board meeting on 5/21/21 (Item IV(H))



Definitions & Statutory References

- T.C.A. §49-16-102(a) authorizes the SBE to promulgate rules and regulations to effectuate the purposes of the chapter
- T.C.A. §49-16-102(b): the SBE “shall develop policies and guidelines for the operation of virtual education programs”
- T.C.A. §49-16-105:
 - LEAs are not required to offer a virtual education program.
 - Participation is in the discretion of the LEA in which the student is enrolled or zoned.
 - Students who are receiving hospital or homebound instruction shall also be eligible to participate.



Existing Virtual Schools in Tennessee



DISTRICT NAME	SCHOOL NAME
Bradley County	Bradley County Virtual School
Bristol	Tennessee Online Public School
Carter County	Carter County Online Academy
Claiborne County	Claiborne Virtual Learning Academy
Davidson County	MNPS Virtual School
Hamilton County	Hamilton County Virtual School
Henry County	Henry County Virtual Academy
Hickman County	Hickman County Learning Academy
Johnson County	Tennessee Connections Academy Johnson County 9-12
Johnson County	Tennessee Connections Academy Johnson County K-8
Lawrence County	Pioneer Virtual Academy
Marion County	Marion Virtual High School
Maury County	Virtual Academy of Maury County
McNairy County	McNairy County Virtual School K-12
Perry County	Pioneer Virtual Academy
Polk County	Polk Innovative Learning Academy
Putnam County	VITAL: Upper Cumberland e-Learning Network
Roane County	Roane County Virtual Academy
Robertson County	Robertson Co. Virtual School
Robertson County	Tennessee Connections Academy 9-12
Robertson County	Tennessee Connections Academy K-8
Rutherford County	Rutherford County Virtual School
Shelby County	Memphis Virtual School
Sumner County	E B Wilson
Union County	Tennessee Virtual Academy
Washington County	Tennessee Virtual Learning Academy
Wayne County	Wayne County Virtual School
Wilson County	Barry Tatum Academy

Number of Virtual Schools

- 28 operating in 2020-21 school year
- 25 different districts
- 15 applications for new virtual schools received as of 5/11/21
- Window for additional submissions is open until **June 1**



How to Open a Virtual School

- [TDOE Virtual School Webpage](#)
- [How to Open a Virtual School](#)
- [Program and School Authorization Form](#)
 - Assurances
 - Section A
 - Addendum C
- Submitted by district's School Directory Contact or Director of Schools
- Submitted to School.Directory@tn.gov by 5 PM CT on June 1



How to Open a Virtual School

Addendum C

1. Excerpt from the minutes of the meeting of the local board of education approving the virtual school.
2. Plan for ensuring that each student enrolled in the virtual school has access to instructional materials and technology, including devices and connectivity, for managing student access, and for providing troubleshooting and repairs.
3. Proposed sequential curriculum that will be implemented at the virtual school, including the complete list of courses to be offered.
4. Plan for providing the same length of time for learning opportunities per academic year that is required for public school students, including proposed daily schedules by grade band.



How to Open a Virtual School



Addendum C

5. Plan for monitoring attendance and enforcing compulsory attendance laws, including truancy intervention, at the virtual school.
6. Plan for enrolling students in the virtual school and ensuring compliance with class size maximums.
7. Plan for administering special education and ELL services to eligible students enrolled in the virtual school and for complying with all federal and state laws, rules and regulations related thereto.
8. Plan for ensuring that teachers in the virtual school are properly licensed, endorsed in their content areas, assigned to students, trained in the delivery of virtual instruction, and annually evaluated.
9. Plan for administering the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) tests or successor tests to students enrolled in the virtual school.

How to Open a Virtual School

- The Division of Choice will review the submission to:
 - ensure that all required materials have been provided;
 - ensure that the proposed virtual school complies with applicable law and regulation; and
 - seek any necessary clarification and/or modification.
- The virtual school will be authorized, and the school directory team will assign a new school number to the virtual school.
- Assigned a “pending” status until July 1, the date of activation



Virtual School FAQs

- [Virtual School FAQs](#)
- Partnering with another district to open a virtual school
- Oversight
 - District
 - Principal
- Enrollment
 - Criteria
 - In/Out of District
 - Partially virtual students



Virtual School FAQs

- Transfers of virtual school students back to their home schools
 - Voluntary
 - Required
 - Accountability
- Participation in extra-curriculars, CTE, sports and other activities of home school
- Teachers
 - Licensure, endorsements
 - Sharing with home schools
- Curriculum requirements



Charter Schools and Virtual Learning



- T.C.A. §49-13-106(d) prohibits a cyber-based charter school
- Charter schools may offer virtual education programs, as long as those programs do not constitute a significant portion of instruction
- Charter schools may contract with an LEA operating a virtual school to provide virtual school services to their charter school students during the 2021-22 school year
 - T.C.A. § 49-13-124(a)
 - Ensure compliance with charter agreement and applicable law
- [Charter School FAQ Webpage](#)

Additional Info & Resources

- Working group meets weekly to address new virtual school questions
- Virtual School FAQs are regularly updated
- Division of Choice is developing a template to evaluate virtual schools and will commence monitoring this summer
- Virtual.Schools@tn.gov



Questions?

